

# Fellowship Overview

The First Freedom Foundation's FoRB Fellowship is a year-long program designed to unite emerging leaders and equip them with the knowledge, skills, and practical experience necessary to elevate Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB) to a mass movement. By uniting fellows from diverse religious groups from around the world, and working together on shared initiatives, the fellowship will shift the narrative from isolated fights to universal rights and build one cohesive, united mass movement. The goal is for the public, politicians, and all stakeholders to understand the critical role that FoRB plays in social cohesion and world peace.

This inaugural cohort consists of 36 highly qualified fellows who will engage with global leaders, implement advocacy efforts, and serve together in working groups. The overarching goal being to turn FoRB into a mass movement for human rights and peace.

## Program Structure

The fellowship will focus on three main components: Scholarship/Study, Skills, and Service. Each component is designed to provide fellows with a blend of learning and practical experience, which will evolve based on the cohort's needs and interests.

### 1. Scholarship

For the first quarter, the Arbing Institute will lead the scholarship component. Fellows will begin with readings such as *The Anatomy of Peace*, *Leadership and Self-Deception*, and *The Outward Mindset*. In subsequent quarters, the cohort will explore topics including:

- The political philosophy of religious freedom, delving into the writings of prominent philosophers from various traditions.
- The theology of religious freedom, exploring religious teachings on freedom of choice.
- Religious freedom advocacy, including books like *International Religious Freedom Advocacy: A Guide to Organizations, Law, and NGOs* and *Ending Persecution: Charting the Path to Global Religious Freedom*.

## 2. Skills

The practical skills component will equip fellows with training on essential advocacy techniques. This component will be led by the Leadership Institute and will include introductory sessions, followed by skill-building in:

- Storytelling for effective advocacy
- Building grassroots movements
- Public speaking and media relations
- Fundraising strategies

## 3. Service

The service component allows fellows to apply their learning and bring about real-world change. Working groups will change throughout the year, but will include groups such as:

- Social media strategy and outreach
- Podcast production and content creation
- YouTube channel development
- News curation and analysis
- Developing a global FoRB directory and background information on key issues
- Event planning and coordination

The Global Youth Summit, planned for the end of November 2024, will be the first major project for the fellowship and a key opportunity for fellows to apply their skills in a collaborative service effort.

## Fellows' Schedule and Commitment

Weekly large-group meetings will occur every Thursday at 11 am Eastern Time. During the first three weeks, additional large-group meetings will take place on Mondays, focusing on connection and goal-setting. Afterward, Mondays will generally be reserved for working group leader meetings, while Fridays will often focus on podcast-related activities. The fellows are expected to commit 10-15 hours per week, with a maximum 10% allowance for missed meetings to receive their completion certificate.

### First Three Weeks Schedule:

- **October 8 (Tuesday):** Announcement of the new cohort at the IRF Roundtable at the IRFBA Ministerial in Berlin. This will be a hybrid event that all fellows are welcome to join.

- **October 14 (Monday):** First official meeting! Half of the fellows will share personal stories about why they are passionate about FoRB.
- **October 17 (Thursday):** The second half of the cohort will share their stories.
- **October 21 (Monday):** Discussion on the Global Youth Summit.
- **October 24 (Thursday):** Selection of the first-quarter goal or Impact Focus.
- **October 28 (Monday):** Fellows will self-organize into working groups using Open Space Technology.
- **October 31 (Thursday):** Introduction to Arbinger's *The Outward Mindset*.

## Global Youth Summit

The second iteration of the Global Youth Summit will be a significant project. Based on lessons learned from last year, we will implement the following changes:

**Event Format:** This year's summit will consist of three sequential eight-hour events with opening and closing circles for each. Each event will cater to a different region (Europe/Africa, Asia, and North/South America), and participants are encouraged to attend the full eight hours of their regional event.

**Participant Limits:** Aiming for a maximum of 150 participants per event to foster more meaningful engagement and discussion, with a total of 450 engaged participants across all three events.

**Theme:** The proposed theme, "Turning FoRB into a Mass Movement," will be open for discussion with the fellows.

## Fellows' Involvement and Expectations

Fellows are expected to actively engage in all fellowship components. Each fellow will commit to at least one working group per quarter, though they may participate in multiple groups if desired. Working group projects will vary by quarter, with fellows collaborating on deliverables in alignment with their chosen group.

To ensure accountability and foster a collaborative environment, a peer review system will be used, with fellows evaluating each other's contributions at the end of each quarter. Additionally, each working group will have a mentor who will provide guidance and feedback to help fellows achieve their project goals.

# Fellowship Communication Platform

For the first quarter, all fellowship communication will take place on the FoRB Forum, and fellows are asked to use this platform exclusively, avoiding other threads on apps like WhatsApp or Signal. This will allow the fellowship to evaluate the forum's effectiveness and determine if it can serve as a central platform for the broader FoRB movement. If the forum proves ineffective, other options will be considered.

# Mentorship and Networking

Each working group will be paired with a mentor experienced in their focus area. Mentors will provide insights, feedback, and ensure the quality of the group's work. Fellows will also engage with global leaders through weekly podcasts, where they can ask questions and explore current FoRB issues.

# FoRB Friends

In addition to the fellowship, the First Freedom Foundation is launching the FoRB Friends Initiative. This is a non-exclusive program that allows a wider audience to engage with the fellowship's mission through activities like monthly webinars, social media events, and opportunities to participate in campaigns. If desired, the Fellows could create a working group specific to developing the FoRB Friends initiative, otherwise it could just be a component of other working groups (eg: events and social media)

# Future Vision and Long-Term Strategy

As part of the goal to expand awareness of FoRB globally, culminating in the production of a docuseries to be distributed on YouTube. While this cohort won't be the focus, the fellowship will help lay the groundwork for future fellows who will be featured.

Building a strong alumni network is also key to the fellowship's success. Graduates of the program will be invited to participate in future events, Global Youth Summits, and collaborate through the FoRB Forum.

# Conclusion

The First Freedom Foundation's FoRB Fellowship is the beginning of a truly global movement. By uniting diverse leaders, equipping them with scholarly knowledge and practical skills, and

emphasizing real-world application, the fellowship will turn Freedom of Religion or Belief into a cause that resonates with everyday people. Together, we will transform FoRB from a sidelined issue into a mass movement for human rights and peace.

#### Topics:

- Religious leaders to creating co-explaining in the community
- Analyze how religious freedom interacts with the rights of religious minorities, including indigenous religions
- Advocating for FoRB in prisons and detention centers - ensuring equal access to religious instruction and worship activities, particularly for religious minorities.
- Religious coexistence and role of FoRB in the times of war
- The Role of Religious and Community leaders in promoting FoRB
- Strengthening FoRB in South Asia: Role of Civil Societies
- Women and FoRB. Make visible the role of women in promoting FoRB, make visible the disproportionate impacts of FoRB violations on women and promote transformative responses, centralize the importance of FoRB for advancing gender justice, strengthening women's leadership in promoting FoRB
- Creating Safe Religious Spaces for Children
- Religious Freedom and Social Cohesion. We could explore how religious freedom can coexist with efforts to foster social cohesion in increasingly multicultural and multi-religious societies.
- Gross violations of FoRB in the Uyghur region of China (aka Xinjiang).
- The role of Education in countering Religious Hate speech. a Advocating on Legislations on Hate speech and religion protection.
- Protection of FoRB defenders as human rights defenders, including religious leaders and broader FoRB advocates
- Countering disinformation: Disinformation leads to conflict. It can shape our perception and change our attitude. Knowing the truth is vital to preventing conflict. How can we as youth advocates play a role in countering disinformation?
- Raising awareness and advocacy amongst stakeholders on FoRB and its legal local and international instruments. Exploring how relevant FoRB matters mostly during the elections period
- Advocating for the release of religious prisoners of conscience